Stella Moris-Assange speech, EU Parliament, 11th of October 2022.

I want to thank miss (Sabrina) Pignedoli and all the MEPs who have supported Julian's candidacy for the Sakharov Prize. It was incredibly encouraging to him that this year, so many MEPs had gotten together. I know that many MEPs had wanted to support the prize as well, but couldn't, because Julian's life is really at risk. I'm not exaggerating. Julian has been in the harshest prison in the United Kingdom. They call it Britain's Guantánamo, Belmarsh Prison. For three and a half years, over three and a half years. It's extremely grim in there. Just a couple of days ago Julian was tested positive for COVID. That means he's been placed in isolation, in further isolation. He spent three and a half years in very difficult conditions in there. When they put you in isolation, in lockdown, it means you're in a cell for 24 hours a day. You don't leave the cell. You don't leave for a shower. You don't leave for food. You don't leave for medication. He's been in that cell since Saturday, for about 72 hours now. Imagine that. We don't know how long that will last, but that's just a drop in the ocean of the brutality and cruelty that is being meted on Julian every day. The very existence of this case prolongs his suffering and he's suffering profoundly.

I just want to give you two anecdotes to show you a little snapshot of what's going on. The first is what happened on Saturday in London. I don't know if you're aware, but we managed to get the most massive showing of support for Julian to date. We set ourselves quite an ambitious goal, which was to surround the British Parliament. I don't know if you've been to London, but you may know that the British Parliament on one side faces the river Thames. To surround the Parliament meant we had to surround Parliament on one side of the river and then we had to cross two Bridges and also surround and cross the other side of the Thames. We calculated we'd need about five thousand people to do that. On Saturday there was also a transport strike, so a lot of people said, well, they cannot possibly achieve this with a transport strike. Lots of people were skeptical to begin with. When you saw the anonymous trolls on Twitter, they would say “don't show up”, “no one will show up”. Well, we far exceeded five thousand people and there's footage to show it. The footage speaks for itself. We surrounded both sides of the Thames and both bridges, in places the sidewalk was replete with people. There were easily seven thousand people there, could have been ten or twelve thousand people in the heart of London. Don't let anyone say that Julian doesn't have support. Just look at those images. That is because the average citizen understands what has been happening here. They have come to realize it's a brutal and primitive political persecution of an individual, a brutal persecution by a state, a cynical abuse of the law in order to keep a man imprisoned, out of a punitive urge that started under the Trump Administration.

The charges came under the Trump Administration in 2018. Why did they come under the Trump Administration? Because the Trump Administration knew that this case would set a precedent, that would allow the U.S. government to go after the press, to use the Espionage Act for publishing, for receiving information from a source, for possessing that information, and for making it public. The use of the Espionage Act does not mean that the U.S. is accusing Julian of being a spy. There's no allegation of that. The Espionage Act is very broadly worded. It was introduced in 1917 in the middle of the first World War. It was worded broadly, so that it could be repurposed. It was immediately used against dissidents who opposed the U.S. participation in the first World War. Then for the first time ever, under the Trump Administration, that piece of legislation was repurposed to be used against a publisher and if you look at the breakdown of the charges against Julian, he faces 170 years in relation to receiving information from a source. I'm repeating it but just think of the process, possessing information and making it (public) and communicating it. The act of communicating is a crime. This is at odds with the very fundamental principles of freedom of speech and of press freedom. You cannot marry these two concepts. What is being done against Julian is an attack not only on the press, but on the ability to communicate freely and to speak the truth and for that truth to be disseminated.

I'm going to give you another little snapshot of what's going on. I have two children with Julian, a three-year-old and a five-year-old, and on the other day my three-year-old was playing in the living room with a friend of mine who was visiting. I kind of saw from the corner of my eye that they were playing something and I didn't understand, my friend didn't really understand what was going on, and I realized what my three-year-old was doing. My three-year-old was playing at being the security guard in Belmarsh prison. He was doing the wand, you know the magnetic wand when they do front and back, so I'll describe to you what my children have to go through in order to see their father. We have to go through an airlock which means doors that close, so you go into a little compartment. One door closes, they take your fingerprints, they don't take the three-year-old's fingerprints, they take mine, okay. We go through the airlock, one door closes, the other one opens, after they take my fingerprints, I go through. Then we go through airport style security like you have here in the European Parliament and then you go through a metal detector arch. Then you go through the one they go from head to toe, you have to lift your feet, you take your shoes off obviously, you can't carry anything in, not a paper, not a tissue. The children have to go through that too, they do the one from head to toe, front and back, under their feet. Then we go through a second body search. They pat you down, they look behind your ears, they look in your hair, you open your mouth, they look under your tongue. They pat you down front and back, under your feet, they put their hands under your feet, your bare feet. Then you go through another airlock, and then another airlock, and then there's a dog search, and the dog searches you, it jumps up on you it smells you, goes back. You have to stay still, the children have to stay still and it's quite intimidating, a dog search. They have to do this just to see their father once a week. Think about that. And why? What has Julian done? He published the truth about war crimes against a powerful government that is exerting its power to punish him. This cruelty is against Julian, it's also against us as a family, against my children, but also against all of you. Staying quiet is just being complicit in this atrocity and I command every MEP who supported this nomination because that's what it takes. You have to raise the political profile of this case until it is absolutely impossible for the U.K. to extradite and for the U.S. to prosecute. You all know what a political case is. You all know what it takes. This is a pure political persecution happening in the heart of Europe.

The consequences of this case will affect all of us and I'll tell you why, because Julian will try to fight this all the way, all the way to the European Court of Human Rights and what is decided in the European Court of Human Rights in relation to Julian's case will set the scope of press freedom in the whole European area. That includes all the European countries. This is not just about Julian upsetting the U.S., this is not just about the U.K. and the U.S., this is a European issue and it's also a European issue because what Wikileaks revealed, was also attacks on European sovereignty, on European citizens. Khalid Al-Masri, a German citizen who was abducted, taken to black sites and tortured by the CIA. It was a case of mistaken identity. When they realized that, they dumped him in Macedonia and then Germany found out. They found out the CIA had been torturing its citizen and that it was a case of mistaken identity. They knew who the perpetrators were and then the U.S. embassy intervened politically to stop any extradition, any real accountability for the people who had tortured the German citizen. We're talking about torture. We're talking about killings. We're talking about the subversion of judicial processes within Europe that we all owe Julian for having revealed. For having taken the brave position to actually hold governments to account. And Wikileaks, Julian's idea with Wikileaks which grew out of the idea in the early 2000s, in the first decade of the 2000s, of government transparency and accountability. That is what Wikileaks grew out of. Do we talk about transparency and government accountability anymore? I don't see it mentioned much, and that is the trajectory we're on. Because Julian is in prison, and he's been in a high security prison for three and a half years. Before that he was persecuted and they abused legal processes in order to keep him in a legal limbo where he could not defend himself, and he was silenced. The trajectory of this case is clear. They have tried to attack Julian's reputation. They have tried to cast doubt over his motivations. They had tried to tarnish Wikileaks’s reputation as well. But it won't work, and I'll tell you why. Because the UN special rapporteur on torture, who was a skeptic, was approached in 2019 or 2018 and said I'm not going to look at that case because I'm not interested in Assange and Wikileaks and what's going on. Then he was approached a second time and then he said well actually I have a duty to at least read the file, he read the file and then he realized he just had to scratch the surface and what transpired was the greatest travesty of justice in the West of our times. This case is THE case of our generation. It defines where we're at right now, and where we're going. What happens to Julian happens to all of us. Because it is our right to know that is being attacked. It is the right to speak the truth and so the special rapporteur on torture Nils Melzer, he wrote a whole book about it. He said I was propagandized, I had received all these ideas and all I had to do was investigate, so I wrote a book after investigating because everyone has to know this. And it's not just Nils Melzer. There are films being made, and five years from now everyone will say well of course I was fighting for Assange. Prove it, do it now, save his life. His life depends on people sitting in this room. If you're in this room, you can do something. Help me save his life.